

We're just strangers by EstherWeepingAngel

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Summary:

Steve Harrington shouldn't care about Billy never kissing him on the mouth.

He shouldn't worry about the bruises on Billy's skin.

They why does he?

1. He doesn't kiss me on the mouth anymore.

Author's Note:

Based on the song Strangers by Halsey and Lauren Jauregui, the title of this work and of the chapters are taken from this song which I absolutely adore.

I was reading some Harringrove fanfic while listening to this song and just started writing without having any plot in mind, which is why it's kind of messy I guess.

hope you like it anyway :)

English is not my native language, so I probably have a lot of mistakes!!

This is also my first work in this fandom, so don't be too harsh.

Steve should have had seen it coming, really.

He's in the car, an unlit cigarette hanging from his lips as he fiddles with the radio, switching stations only to find out that they all play shit and finally turning it off.

He lights his cigarette and takes a long drag, not even bothering to open a window. He promised Nancy (who apparently thought that being his ex meant being his mom) that he would stop, but he's on edge and Billy is late.

He checks his watch and sees that lunch time is almost over. Steve swears and thinks about leaving to buy some lunch when the door on the passenger's side opens and Billy slides in, all dirty blonde messy curls and a leather jacket thrown on broad shoulders.

"Hey, Harrington." He's smiling, of course he is, pink lips playfully teasing Steve who's doing his best to not stare.

"You're late." His voice is annoyed but he hands Billy his unfinished

cigarette anyway. Billy takes it with his stupid smirk, making sure to leave his fingers on Steve's longer than necessary, and presses his lips around the stick (Steve does his best to not let the childish side of him think of it as an indirect kiss), blowing the smoke with his head tilted back.

Steve looks at him, wondering how Billy makes breathing in cancer look so hot, almost graceful. Billy's movements are monotone as he breaths in the smoke, blows it out, only to do it again. He does it a few times before he speaks.

"You want a picture, Stevie?"

"Shut up. I thought you said to meet outside at twelve."

"Yeah well," Billy's almost done with the cigarette, his long fingers fishing another one from his own pack. "I was busy."

"Busy?"

"Yeah, some really important assignment."

"Huh?"

"Natalie, redhead sophomore."

Steve swallows, the familiar burn of jealousy making his fingers tingle. "I'm sick of you wasting my time, Hargrove. Next time you're planning on ditching me for someone else, don't bother calling me in the first place."

Billy's smiles even harder, he runs his tongue against his pearly white teeth with a laugh.

"Aww, are you jealous princess? That's too bad, I thought you were different than those needy bitches."

Steve feels the anger flare up in his chest and he glares at Billy.

"I'm not one of your dumb flings, Hargrove. Now if you're done wasting my time, get the fuck out of my car."

Billy looks at him for a few seconds without responding and Steve is

seriously considering punching him when Billy leans toward him, his lips going straight for Steve's neck.

Steve can smell cigarettes mixed with cologne and what he thinks is women's perfume reeking from Billy, but he doesn't push him away. He wraps his arms around Billy's shoulders, pulls the blonde toward him until their chests are flushed and Steve can feel Billy's necklace tickling his skin.

Billy wraps his arms around Steve's waist and tugs until Steve is placed on his lap. Billy kisses along his jaw and nips at his neck, not leaving the familiar sweet spot under his ear until Steve starts to whimper.

They awkwardly move to the back seat and Billy kisses all the way down to Steve's hips without looking the other boy in the eyes, his wicked smile growing even wider while he takes off Steve's tight jeans.

Steve sighs, tries to not be too bothered by the fact that Billy never kisses him on his mouth and leans back, wondering for the hundredth time how he ended up here.

If anyone would have told Steve Harrington two months ago that he was going to spend most of his lunch breaks (and then all of his time after school) making out or sleeping with Billy Hargrove, he would have probably punched them or get worried about their mental health.

Or both.

The thing is, Billy and Steve were never supposed to get to that "more than friends" point. They were never even friends. Billy just showed up next to Steve's car on a chilly December morning, a few minutes before class, and handed him a cigarette- despite having beat the shit out of him two weeks prior.

And then it happened again, and again, until it was a routine. A weird one, definitely, but it was something Steve looked forward to

every single day. Just meeting up to smoke every day without talking unless it was to ask for a lighter.

Steve felt kind of pathetic for the shivers running down his spine when he saw Billy approaching. He couldn't stop stuttering the day Billy smiled winked as well.

Then they went from smoking outside one of their cars to sitting together on the leather seats, chain-smoking until the car permanently smelled like a mix of smoke and Billy's cologne. And then Steve found himself in the back seat with Billy after smoking some of the weed that Billy bought from some senior.

It doesn't even make sense. Steve is not gay. Neither is Billy, at least not from what Steve know. They both had girlfriends before, Steve likes girls. He can't be a *fag*.

Steve thinks about the gay kid from school who moved away from Hawkins after getting beaten up by the basketball team, back when Steve was a sophomore.

Steve thinks about his father spending his rare occasions at home insulting his gay co-worker and saying that in his opinion, all of the people marching at pride should be thrown in asylums.

No, Steve can't possibly be gay. Billy Hargrove is a rebound, a reflection of how broken Nancy and a year of supernatural madness left him. They're not a couple, hell they're not even *friends*. Steve shouldn't be expecting Billy to stop seeing other girls.

What was going on between them was out of loneliness and need of affection from Steve's side and probably out of boredom from Billy's. They're nothing, just two strangers who went from hating each other to having messy and unemotional sex out of pure lust.

Which is why Steve hates the fact that they never had a proper conversation, or the way Billy only touches him with the intention of fucking him later on.

Steve hates himself for wondering how taking Billy's hand in his

would feel, how Billy would look if he'd take him out to fancy dinners like he did with Nancy.

He tries to imagine how Billy would react if he'd try to voice his concern about the bruises covering Billy's toned skin, or if he'd try to come up with an explanation to Billy's family moving to Hawkins and Billy's hatred for Max, but he *shouldn't*.

Billy's life story shouldn't bother him, neither should his stupid sharp jawline and his calloused fingers.

So Steve smokes cigarette after cigarette, drinks more of his dad's liquor with the hope of drowning in it burning him whole.

Billy Hargrove is not his boyfriend, friend, or even lover after all.

He's a distraction, just a stranger who manages to numb the hunger, guilt, and sadness that fills Steve's heart.

So the fact that Billy always ends up leaving shouldn't matter to him, not even a little bit.

It definitely shouldn't hurt this bad, not at all.

2. He doesn't let me have control anymore

Notes for the Chapter:

So the beginning of this chapter is mainly focusing on Billy's past, the songfic part is in the second part of the chapter.

This chapter is a bit different than the last (There's literally no dialogue until the very end bye) but Billy is such a complex character in my opinion that I just felt the need to write a bit about him, to show why he's acting that way with Steve. I was hesitant about posting this(as I always am before posting something tbh) and was actually thinking about writing another version of this but then decided that I liked the way it turned out. I hope that makes sense (?) and I hope you'll like it too :)

English is not my native language, I apologize for any mistake I might have.

Billy is eleven when he smokes for the first time.

He's hanging out with the older kids. They're the only ones willing to speak to him after he almost beats Noah Davis to death. Maybe he did overreact, but the asshole insulted Billy's mother, and when Billy's small fist connects with Noah's face, the only things he thinks about are his mom's grave and his dad's fists coming at him the same way he's coming at Noah.

So the older kids welcome him in their group when his whole grade rejects him out of disgust or fear, maybe both, and they give him his first cigarette at the age of eleven.

He tries to stop when his dad catches a pack in his room, or when Susan moves in with her daughter and says that she hates the smell.

But it's easier to fall back into the nasty habit and to smoke away his anxiety or the pain from his dad's hits instead of figuring out how to solve his problems.

He tries to stop again when a boy he finds pretty in his group of friends tells him that he hates cigarettes. Billy doesn't know why, but

he also starts to listen to David Bowie when Jace mentions him more than once and gets a haircut when Jace says he hates long hair.

Then one day Jace jokingly calls him a faggot at lunch when Billy stares for too long, and Billy spends his afternoon burning his Bowie tapes while smoking cigarette after cigarette. That day he also decides to grow his hair out into a mullet.

For a few months, Billy dares to believe that things are going to be okay.

His new sister Maxine is childish, but not too annoying, too busy hiding behind a curtain of red hair or comic books to bother him. Suzan is polite and too cheerful, but she actually cares and asks what's his favorite food.

Max and her mom move in during the spring, Billy is sixteen and thinks of his dad's previous girlfriends who never stuck with him for too long. But to Billy's surprise, they're still here when he turns seventeen at the end of January.

There's no big celebration, his dad's not familiar with the concept of birthday parties, and his friend's idea of a birthday party is trying to sneak into a bar or a strip club. Billy is almost brought to tears when Susan comes home with a store-bought chocolate cake.

Its taste is factory made and the cherries on top feel like plastic, but Billy smiles more than he has in years and he hugs both Max and his stepmom, not bothering to give his father more than a brief nod.

Billy thinks that he might be happy, finally, under California's warm sun with his new family by his side.

They weren't perfect, his dad was still an asshole and Billy was still gay.

But they were okay.

And then they weren't.

It happens the first time Jace is over at Billy's house, both of them trying to study for their English test, only to end up lying next to each other on Billy's bed.

Billy tries to listen to Jace as he rambles about his horrible homeroom teacher, but his green eyes are too mesmerizing and his dark skin looks glowing despite the shitty lighting in Billy's room. And then Jace turns on his side and catches Billy staring at him, Billy is about to apologize or make a dumb joke when suddenly Jace is leaning in and kissing him.

The kiss lasts only a few seconds, chaste and dry lips pressed together without knowing what to do next. And then they're interrupted by the door slamming open. Billy's heart stops when he hears a gasp and catches a glimpse of fiery red hair before Max runs away.

Max tells her mom. Her mom tells his dad. His dad beats Billy up until he can't walk or open his mouth without his body screaming in agony, and in less than two weeks they're packing up and driving to the middle of fucking Indiana.

Hawkins, Indiana is exactly what Billy expected- a freezing hellhole in the middle of nowhere. Billy goes to school the moment his bruises are faded, and he is not surprised by Hawkins' high school either. The small school is filled by fake people, who all do their best to stand out in a small town where everybody's the fucking same. The girls are all pathetic and the boys are all wannabees.

But Billy still goes to their parties and listen to their gossip, paying special attention to the ones about Steve Harrington, who used to own this school -whatever the hell that means- and who now spends his days at school alone or with Nancy Wheeler and Jonathan Byers who are also the topic of a generous amount of rumors and disses.

Steve doesn't stand out much, his floppy hair and slim built not particularly catching Billy's attention. But despite his average looks and personality Billy enjoys teasing the other boy to no end during gym class, picking at him and trying to wear his patience thin. He is somehow satisfied by the way Steve looks down, without even trying to fight back.

He gets that satisfaction when he does the same thing to Max too, his anger at her for telling his secret and making them move away from

home shoves deep in his mind the guilt he feels. He breaks and wipes away the fresh bond that had barely formed between them until their strangers again, their mutual hatred toward the other the only thing they have in common.

Max fights back sometimes, but she always ends up backing down, and Billy does his best to ignore the fact that he's becoming his father as he does his best to turn the mere moments he spends with Steve and Max as miserable as he can.

Billy knows that one day Steve would end up punching him in the face. He also knows that one day Max would snap too and do more than try to talk back before shying away from his stare.

What he doesn't expect is for both to happen in less than five minutes. He definitely doesn't expect to get in a fight with Steve and almost killing him, and he is shocked when he sees a blurry image of Max swinging a fucking bat with nails dangerously close to his crotch before passing out.

When he wakes up a few hours later, he's in the Byer's house and he clumsily crawls out and sits in his car for an hour and a half before he's awake enough to drive home without crashing it.

Max is home when he gets back and Billy's dad hits him again the minute he steps into the kitchen for being late, not even bothering to hide it from Max and her mom. The latter looks down with pursed lips, just as usual, and Max's eyes are open wide as she looks at Billy.

Billy goes to bed and forces himself to sleep despite the tears that stream down his face.

Billy can't say sorry.

He tries to approach Max in the house, but she just glares at him and storms off to her room. He even tries to start a conversation while she's with her friends, to maybe apologize to them too, but they all look at him in a way that makes him feel sick, and Max's angry warning is not the only thing that makes him wait for her in the car.

And so Billy finds himself walking up to Steve who is leaning on his car, digging into his backpack for something and cursing as he pulls out an empty pack of cigarettes. Billy watches him before leaning next to him and handing him his own pack and staring at the floor.

Billy realizes he's a coward when he does that, because offering a damn cigarette as a truce is way easier than putting the guilt and regret that choke him into words. Billy prepares himself for harsh words and maybe some hits, just like he does when his father has a bad day at work when Steve surprises him by taking a cigarette from the pack and sticking it between his teeth.

They don't talk at first, but it's calming, somehow. Not being all alone.

Their relationship goes from smoking buddies to sex pretty fast. Billy's scared at the beginning, terrified of someone watching them from the window and telling his father about how much of an abomination he was.

Billy stops kissing Steve after their first make out. He doesn't know if it's because of how intimate it is, or if it's because Steve sucking his dick while he runs his fingers through the soft brown hair makes him less gay (It doesn't). Or maybe Steve's soft lips reminds him too much of Jace.

Billy is usually the one who initiates their hookups, discreet whispers of a time and a place in Steve's ear when no one's looking.

He feels his heart swell up everytime Steve shows up without ever being late.

For some reason, Steve always starts with small talk and rants about school and such before Billy jumps on him and pushes him back until Steve is under him, his pupils dilated in excitement.

Billy tries to not think too much about how powerful he feels when they're like that, when Billy is in control. Billy never tells Steve that he gets the exact same feeling every time he beats someone up (he never tells him that every time he kicks or punches someone he imagines Neil's face being the one torn apart).

Sometimes they stay together after, lazily passing a cigarette between them while a mixtape that Billy chooses is playing. The loud angry music is an excuse to not talk, and on those times Billy looks at everything but Steve, even when the other boy stares at him without looking away.

One time Steve brushes a finger over the mark Neil's foot left on Billy's hip and asks what happened, and Billy shoves his hand away as he forces his arrogant smirk to climb up his face.

"Not that it's any of your concerns, but I fell. Don't worry about me, pretty boy. I'm a tough guy."

Steve looks at him with worry. Billy doesn't care.

Billy makes sure to have hookups and even the occasional week-long relationship with some girls at school. He can't ruin his reputation, after all, too scared of someone figuring out that girls are not even his type.

Billy flashes flirtatious smiles around, ignores Steve during classes and gets used to the routine of spending the time he has to wait for Max after school with Steve in one of their cars, preferably in the back seat and without clothes.

Steve's naked figure is just as skinny as it is when he has his designer clothes on, though his arms are nicely toned. But he's too pale, his eyes too dark and Billy keeps thinking of the warm sun back home in California and green eyes, and he knows it's wrong but a part of him doesn't even care about the way he uses Steve.

Steve looks just as broken and lonely as Billy feels, and they complete each other in a weird way that makes Billy snap less at Max and smile more easily.

Billy gets used to the routine of being strangers with Steve. He almost feels okay again, obviously not perfect, but okay.

And then Steve doesn't show up.

Billy waits by his car, smokes more and more while throwing impatient looks around, not catching sight of Steve's familiar mop of

hair. As Max slips into the passenger seat, Billy starts the car and tells himself that Steve probably had something to do, reminding himself of all the times he made Steve wait for him and the times he himself didn't show up.

There's nothing to worry about.

The next day Steve is already waiting by Billy's car, his hands shoved deep inside his jacket's pockets.

Billy leans next to him, his pack already open toward Steve's direction.

"Want one?"

"No thanks."

Billy's smile falters but he laughs anyway. "I'm starting to get worried, princess. You didn't show up yesterday."

"Yeah, about that," Steve kicks the ground nervously, his annoyingly shiny converse shoes scratching the pavement. "I want to stop."

"What?"

"I don't want us to... be together anymore."

"Together?" Billy's face is confused and Steve's laughs bitterly.

"Right, we're not and never been together. How could I forget."

"Harrington, what are you talking about?"

"I don't think we should see each other anymore. This whole... thing that's going on, it has to stop."

"But why?" Billy sighs with impatience, his voice rising.

"I don't deserve this."

"Huh?"

"I'm sick of you using me just because you're bored or horny. You only want me for one thing, Billy, and I don't want to be this person anymore."

"God damn- Steve you're overthinking this."

Billy places his hand on Steve's arm and when the other shakes him off he bursts into laughter.

"When did you become so sensitive, princess?"

"I guess I'm just like those needy bitches."

Steve makes eye contact with him and Billy flinches at the harshness and hurt in his brown eyes. He's no longer laughing, he just watches Steve for a few seconds, sizes him up and realizes how serious he is.

"There is nothing wrong with fooling around, Harrington."

"Maybe for you," Billy feels the anger flare up in his chest when he sees the pity in the way Steve looks at him. "But I want more than wasting my time on a stranger."

Steve walks away, just like that, stepping on the half-finished cigarette that Billy threw away without noticing. He doesn't look back at Billy like he usually does. Not even once.

Billy gets in the car and looks at the wheel in front of him with glossy eyes until Max finally arrives. He starts the car in silence while ignoring her questioning looks and he starts to drive away from the school, gripping the wheel so hard his knuckles turn white and his fingernail leave marks on his palm.

Billy turns on the radio that's playing a Bowie song and doesn't sing along as he forces himself to feel nonchalant, because Steve doesn't have any effect on him, his words don't matter.

Billy can't let them hurt him even a little bit. Steve is just a pathetic stranger and Billy doesn't give a damn about him, not at all.

Notes for the Chapter:

This was kind of sad but I might write some

Harringrove fluff one day.

Thank you for reading, kudos and comments are highly appreciated and always make my day! :)